



## SCIENCE-FANTASY REVIEW

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ARTHUR C. CLARKE on The 2001 Myth

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# THE ETERNAL QUEST

WALK into any large bookstore and you'll see whole rows of science fiction novels and anthologies, all brilliantly jacketed, inviting your rapt attention. If your taste lies more in the direction of horror or weird tales, you are likely to be just as spoiled for choice.

It's a very different picture from the days when sf enthusiasts were faced with much the same problem, but in reverse. Just over 20 years ago, **Science-Fantasy Review** was reflecting the burgeoning of a literature largely confined to the U.S.A., until the critics found that some of it had merit, and book publishers began to realise its possibilities for exploitation.

Quantity seldom makes for quality. Science-fiction is one of the exceptions. Writers who had been unrecognised by the general public found themselves famous — and well-rewarded — almost overnight. New writers received every encouragement; old stories gained a new lease of life. And as the medium has gradually expanded out of all proportion, the general standard has improved, due to the increasing demands of readers more discriminating — or sceptical — than those of an earlier generation.

With the acceptance of sf, not only by the book trade but by the cinema and television, its writers have acquired a new status — and the added skill that comes with increased opportunity. Today, the thousands who have been converted to sf by the natural course of events, particularly in the sphere of space-travel, find some difficulty in keeping track of all the books, films and TV plays that vie for their approval.

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If you are already a keen devotee of sf, you cannot afford to ignore COSMOS. If you are a comparative newcomer to the literature, it will nurture your interest and increase your knowledge of a medium whose past development is as intriguing as its future will undoubtedly prove. For don't believe those who say that sf will die the moment that man sets foot on the Moon. The further we probe into our universe, the more curious we shall be about its unfathomable mysteries, and the more we shall speculate upon them, giving further scope for sf to make its vital contribution to man's thinking.

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**WALTER GILLINGS, Editor and Publisher.**

# DEAD AUTHOR INSPIRES NEW SF VENTURE

By **THOMAS SHERIDAN**

LANCASHIRE author John Russell Fearn, who died nine years ago after 30 years of intensive story-writing for a score of publications, is the inspiration behind a new science fiction enterprise to be launched in Britain by an Australian business man.

Fearn, whose output amounted to millions of words and appeared under many pen-names besides his own, will be resurrected in a series of pocket-books to accompany a new magazine, **Vision of Tomorrow**, which will carry the work of English and Australian writers. First issue is planned for June.

The magazine will be edited by Northumberland enthusiast Philip Harbottle, author of a biographical study of the prolific writer who became known among his contemporaries as "The Blackpool Wonder" and whom he considers has not received the recognition he deserves.

Backing the project is Ronald E. Graham, 59-years-old owner and managing director of several engineering companies in Australia. Reputed to have the biggest collection of sf Down Under, he too is a lifelong admirer of Fearn's work — which, during his heyday, was often violently criticised by readers of the American magazines to which he contributed tales more notable for their idea-content than literary quality.

## 'A' for sf

Reared on **Superman**, **Captain Marvel** and **Dan Dare** before devouring the work of Vargo Statten — a Fearn pseudonym which, in 1954, was incorporated in the title of a British magazine — Editor Harbottle is a former pupil of Wallsend-on-Tyne Grammar School who gained his 'A' level in English Literature by swotting up sf instead of the set books. He is now in local government

service. At 27, he has been active in sf circles for six years.

He joined forces with Graham in a mutual effort to persuade existing publishers to reprint some of Fearn's work. Disappointed at their reluctance, Graham resolved to form his own publishing company to create a new market for British and Commonwealth writers in this country.

Among English writers **Vision** will feature are William F. Temple, E. C. Tubb, Kenneth Bulmer, Lee Harding, Eric Williams and John Rankine.

Much of the Australian material will be selected by Associate Editor John Bangsund, editor-publisher of the **Australian SF Review**. The new magazine will be launched on a bi-monthly basis, in pocket-book format, at a probable price of 5s. It will include book reviews and author profiles, and also feature translations of foreign tales, the first by Polish writer Stanislaw Lem.

## Pocket books

A series of pocket-book anthologies to appear simultaneously with the magazine, featuring stories by Frank Edward Arnold, William F. Temple, and other **Vision** contributors, is also planned. First of these will be titled **Journey to Tomorrow**. Both old and new novels, to include Fearn's scientific detective tales under the name of Hugo Blayne, are projected.

Said Editor Harbottle: "**Vision** will publish only new stories, and we hope to encourage new writers who are handicapped by the lack of a definite British sf market. Our publisher feels that a new magazine is urgently needed, not only here but for the whole Commonwealth, and especially for Australian sf expression. We welcome any ideas and suggestions that may help towards its success."

# JOHN CARNELL tells how he created **A NEW WORLD OF SF WRITING**

IT WAS more than the end of an era for me when I parted company with Nova Publications just five years ago. It was also the end of a way of life. I had spent 18 years editing **New Worlds Science Fiction**, all but three of 64 issues of **Science-Fantasy**, and 34 issues of **Science Fiction Adventures**.

But on these years of experience I founded new lines of activity — as a literary agent specialising in sf,

devotees who patronised the paperback market.

Another advantage here was that, unlike magazines which fall out of date soon after publication, a paperback can remain on sale indefinitely and even be reprinted — not once but several times, so long as the demand is there.

From the viewpoint of sales, therefore, the series was an instant success. There is even an American

**Britain's leading sf editor, who left New Worlds to experiment with New Writings in SF, describes the revolution which has freed authors from editorial tyranny . . . and made editors much happier in their work**

while continuing editorial work in a rather less hectic yet more exciting way. I had the idea, prompted by a dropping off in magazine sales, of editing a series of collections of stories, as yet unpublished, for the rapidly expanding paperback market.

I say I had the idea — but it wasn't entirely new. It was originated by Frederik Pohl and Ballantine Books, of New York, in 1953 with their **Star Science Fiction** series. But it was a revolutionary departure for this country.

Yet when I put the plan to Corgi Books they had no hesitation in contracting for four titles a year, special arrangements being made with the firm of Dennis Dobson for hard-cover editions to appear first.

The advantage was that the series could fill two important roles. First they would appeal, in bound form, to library borrowers whose common complaint was that they had "read most of those stories before" in anthologies dredged up from magazines. Then, later, they would attract the steadily enlarging circle of sf

edition published by Bantam Books. But, editorially, I was not too happy with the first five volumes of **New Writings in SF**. So I temporarily abandoned my policy of using only new stories and included reprints of little-known tales by Isaac Asimov, William Tenn, Frederik Pohl and Dennis Etchison.

Still, this series was never intended to be just "magazine stories." I wanted to give writers an opportunity to express concepts and present them in the way they wanted, not according to a rigid policy such as is usually laid down by a magazine editor. All I expected was that they kept within the framework of a good story well narrated.

The trial and error period proved worthwhile. It was not long before authors such as Keith Roberts, Colin Kapp, Arthur Sellings, Douglas R. Mason and many others were producing fine, thought-provoking tales with a difference. Brian W. Aldiss quickly recognised the possibilities and contributed to the first volume with "Man on the Bridge," followed in No. 10 by that fascinating time

## **ANNOUNCING AN IMPORTANT SF SERIES**

A new sf magazine and paperback line is now being created by the Ronald E. Graham Group of Australia, to be edited and published in Britain.

# **VISION OF TOMORROW**

is a new, bi-monthly sf magazine to be published in June at .5s. It will contain 192 pages in a slick paperback format, and be edited by Philip Harbottle, well-known in fan circles for his studies of sf history and pioneer writers.

THE FIRST ISSUE will have a cover by Gerard Quinn illustrating William F. Temple's new novelette WHEN IN DOUBT — DESTROY! Other fine stories include THE VAULT by Damien Broderick; SWORDS FOR A GUIDE by Kenneth Bulmer; ANCHOR MAN by Jack Wodhams; CONSUMER REPORT by Lee Harding — and there are many other features, with news, articles and reviews.

AND THAT'S NOT ALL! The Ronald E. Graham Group will also bring you VISION BOOKS, a new paperback series devoted to the finest work of vintage and modern sf writers. Watch for —

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## JOHN CARNELL — *from page 5*

story, "A Taste for Dostoevsky."

Vincent King, an artist by training, began to devise complex plots with overtones of sheer poetic horror; while Keith Roberts, another artist and ad-man besides, produced such gems as "Manscarer" and "Synth."

Behind all this experimental writing, however, remained the basic backbone of accepted sf. James White contributed another "Sector General Hospital" series; Colin Kapp continued his tales of "Unorthodox Engineers." New, unknown writers began to appear, and the international net spread to Australia, Canada, Belgium and Spain.

And still the search goes on as the series passes its fourteenth volume. With more time to spare between each publication — three times a year now — I can be more exacting editorially than when I had to meet monthly magazine deadlines.

Meanwhile the idea of hardcover/

paperback "new stories" continues to develop, especially in the U.S.A. Damon Knight edits a series titled **Orbit** (published here by Rapp & Whiting and Panther Books). Harlan Ellison is developing his **Dangerous Vision** series, and at least one other American series is well into the planning stage for this year, while news reaches me of a possible British enterprise of this sort.

An enthusiastic Corgi blurb writer summed it up pertinently when he observed that the idea represents "the next step forward in expanding the sf short story from the limitations it has suffered during the past 30 years."

Many times in the past frustrated writers have rebelled against the restrictions which magazine editors have had, necessarily, to impose on them. Today's writers are luckier; the strings have been loosened. And those editors who have also gained their freedom find their task that much more rewarding. At least, I do.

## RAPP & WHITING

Whose 1969 programme includes new books from

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*New mag  
for movie  
monster  
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launched.*

*Editor  
**TIM  
STOUT**  
maintains:*

• Slickly produced, nicely illustrated with a generous helping of film stills, and promising "to hold up a mirror . . . reflecting the good, bad and indifferent" for the "shudder-hungry", *Supernatural* found a ready market at the end of January.

Published quarterly by Dorset Publishing Co., Bournemouth, the magazine's first issue carried 48 pp. which are good value at 3s.6d. Contents include interviews with Dennis Wheatley and Christopher (Count Dracula) Lee by Editor Tim Stout.

Most striking was the coloured cover showing Dracula in his coffin pulling a stake out of his heart, intent on another excursion, in defiance of all the rules. The pic is from the recent Hammer film, Dracula Is Risen from the Grave, and is offered, autographed by Lee, to any reader giving it an appropriate caption. Our tips: (1) Out for the Count; (2) "Drat these bloody splinters!"; (3) "Doc, quick — a transplant!"

Now read what Editor Stout has to say about his magazine, next issue of which will appear, defiantly, on April 13.

## HORROR'S BEST ON FILM

APART from an occasional "one-shot," there has never until now been a British magazine catering specially for followers of fantasy in the cinema. This is difficult to understand. Cinema managers gleefully rub their hands when they run a Hammer Films double bill, and enthusiastic audiences trek in from all over the country to see a film like *2001*. Yet *Supernatural* is taking advantage of a virtually untapped market.

Why *Supernatural*? Because no other word can so adequately describe a field ranging from deep-rooted belief in demons and vampires to the modern sophistries of George Pal's *The Power*. Take the word to mean precisely what it suggests — that which seems to be above or beyond the accepted laws of nature — and the countless constituents of the genre fall conveniently into one colossal pigeon-hole.

In this category are UFOs, dragons, resurrected mummies, telepathy, the Shaver Mystery\*, H.P.

\*Denounced by outraged old-time readers as a hoax rather than a mystery, the stories of Pennsylvanian welder Richard S. Shaver were presented by *Amazing Stories* editor Raymond A. Palmer in 1945 as actual "racial memories" and advanced the idea that an Elder Race descended from the Lemurians was still living in caverns honeycombing the Earth.

Lovecraft, lycanthropy, Charles Fort, and all the baffling, frightening aspects of life and death that have intrigued the curious down the centuries.

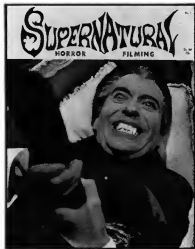
The cinema is well equipped to turn our fears and wonders into enjoyable entertainment. Roger Corman's film versions of the tales of

**TIM STOUT** is a 22-year-old Essex journalist who has been impressed by the bizarre since, as a boy, he saw a picture of a diplodocus. Interested in all aspects of the fantastic in literature and the cinema, he leans towards the study of vampirism and undiscovered monsters. As hobbies he keeps alligators and goes in for foil-fencing.

Edgar Allan Poe demonstrated how colour can be used to induce a macabre atmosphere. MGM's *Forbidden Planet* was a truly memorable experience. Low-budget productions like *The Abominable Snowman*, *Village of the Damned* and *Unearthly Stranger* were proof that even without lush trappings the film is the ideal medium for conveying the thrill, horror and pathos of human contact with the supernatural.

I realise, of course, that the written word is the superior invitation to imagination, rather than the resolved cinematic image. Every reader of Clarke's "Childhood's End"





dreams up his own Karallen. A film version would present a Satanically-suited figure who would look the same to everybody.

But the vast resources of the cinema—colour filters, clever editing effects, the subtleties of light and shadow, and all the visual tricks it can pull—permit an endless variety of ventures into the eerie and fantastic.

**Supernatural** will, therefore, tend to give more space to the cinema than to literature, because of the difficulty of adequately illustrating articles about books and stories. Eventually, I hope, the emergence of artists with a flair for the genre will enable us to give better coverage to its writers.

Still, we shall not overlook such modern phenomena as the mysterious UFOs. In our first issue, publisher Rodney Legge advances his theory that large chalk markings still to be seen in Dorset were originally intended as makers for low-flying saucers. This is the first in a series of factual articles that should appeal to all readers of an inquiring frame of mind.

Next in this series will be a review of the various theories on the nature of the Loch Ness Monster. Later we hope to deal with the mysterious career of Dr. Wilhelm Reich and what is known of the secret of Glamis Castle.

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## ARTHUR C. CLARKE on

# THE MYTH OF 2001

AFTER six years of being largely devoted to the single project of 2001, I still find myself much too close to it to consider it really objectively. It is obvious, too, that there is far more in it than I realised when we were making it; perhaps more than Stanley Kubrick, its principal creator, intended.

True, we set out with the deliberate intention of creating a myth. The Odyssean parallel was in our minds from the beginning, long before the film's title was chosen. A myth has many elements, including a religious one. Quite early in the game I went around saying (not very loudly): "MGM doesn't know it yet, but they're footing the bill for the first ten-million-dollar religious movie."

But it is still surprising to see how many people realised this — and amusing to find how many faiths

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• THE most significant — and successful — sf film ever made, 2001 — A Space Odyssey — is due for general release early this month. When first shown it caused a furore among the critics, many of whom it left as baffled as the crowds who rushed to see it. Even some devotees of sf, while admiring its technical excellence, could not fathom it — or just didn't like it. In this article, specially written for COSMOS, the famous British author of the story which inspired the film answers some of the criticisms and gives a typically frank opinion of what he thinks of it.

~~~~~  
have tried to stake claims in the finished work.

Several film critics have seen a cross motif in some of the astronomical scenes. I feel fairly certain this is purely a matter of camera composition.

Still, it was with quite a shock that we recently discovered there is actually a Buddhist sect that worships a large black, rectangular slab! The analogy of the Kaaba has also been mentioned. Though I certainly did not have it in mind at the time, the fact that the Black

Stone sacred to the Moslems is reputed to be a meteorite is more than a quaint coincidence.

All the mythical elements in the film, intentional and otherwise, help to explain the extraordinarily powerful responses it has evoked from audiences and reviewers. In this we have been successful beyond our wildest dreams — certainly beyond mine!

I have read hundreds of reviews from newspapers and magazines all over the world,\* and a pretty clear pattern of critical reaction has emerged.

A small number of reviewers said, even at first screening, that the movie was a masterpiece and a landmark in cinema history. Some remarked, flatly, that it is "obviously" one of the most important films ever made.

Another small but significant section didn't like it the first time they saw it, wrote rather critical notices, brooded for some days, and went to see it again. Then they wrote second reviews which were not merely recantations but, in some cases, positive raves.

\*The most important reviews of the film, with much other material, will shortly be published by the New American Library in a book edited by Jerome B. Angel.

This is the typical reaction to a new and revolutionary work of art — as in the case of the first performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* — but in the past this process of evaluation took years or even decades. I remember remarking to Kubrick that he was luckier than Melville, who never lived to see the world appreciate *Moby Dick*.

Melville's masterpiece has, of course, been mentioned many times in connection with *2001*, though it is only asking for trouble to make such comparisons. I had this work constantly in mind as a prototype — the use of hard technology to construct a launch-pad for metaphysical speculation.

It took about half a century before literary criticism caught up with Melville. I wonder how many college theses are now being written on *2001* . . . ?

The majority of reviews were favourable but somewhat baffled, while another minority group was vociferously hostile. Yet this very hostility goes to prove the emotional impact of the film. That acute critic Damon Knight, who has pronounced it "undoubtedly one of the best films ever made," considers the peculiarly obtuse reaction of some sf critics simply due to embarrassment. They just couldn't face the religious implications.

There are others who, quite understandably, expected an updated *Destination Moon* and were nonplussed by Kubrick's version. But time will prove that Kubrick was perfectly correct; and the box-office has already done so, for in almost all countries the film has been a fantastic commercial success.

To have done a straightforward documentary-type movie, at the very moment when men were preparing to land on the Moon, would have been to court disaster and provided no kind of artistic challenge. George Pal's *Destination Moon* was magnificent for 1950 — but we were more interested in starting where it ended.

Soon after *2001* was premiered and the first cries of puzzlement sounded in our ears, I made a remark that horrified MGM's top brass. "If you understand it at first viewing," I said, "we shall have failed."

I stand by this verdict — which



How spaceflight was visualised 30 years ago. This was the insignia of *Wonder Stories' Science Fiction League* — to which, naturally, Arthur Clarke belonged. The cover picture shows him outside the MGM studios. Inset is a scene from the film in which an astronaut floats in space on a repair mission.

doesn't mean that one can't enjoy the film the first time round. What I meant, of course, was that we were dealing with the mystery of the universe, and with powers and forces greater than man's comprehension. So, by definition, they could not be totally understood.

Yet there is a logical structure — sometimes more than one! — behind everything that happens on the screen in *2001*. As for the much-discussed ending, it does not consist of random enigmas, some simple-minded critics to the contrary. You will find my interpretation in the novel; it is not necessarily Kubrick's. Nor is his necessarily the "right" one — whatever that means.

*2001* has already become part of film history. It is the first sf movie to do so, in my judgment; and its success has been so overwhelming that it poses in a particularly acute form the embarrassing problem: "Where do we go from here?" Yet in a few years it will probably seem old-fashioned and people will wonder what all the fuss was about.

As for the dwindling minority who still don't like it — that's their problem, not ours. Stanley Kubrick and I are laughing all the way to the bank.

**GEOFFREY GILES** tells the story  
of sixteen years' service to sf . . .

## IT'S A HARD SELL—BUT THE PRICE IS RIGHT!

ROUND about 1952, it was, that British publishers woke up to the fact that sf in America — where most of them had preferred to let it remain — had undergone a change. Instead of being gaudily presented in pulp magazines, it had taken on the respectability of hard covers.

Discerning British critics echoed the sentiments of U.S. observers of the literary scene who had been impressed by the display of unsuspected talent.

Pronouncing judgment in *The Observer*, Angus Wilson saw a "rosy future" for the medium, which "offers more vitality, a more expanding prospect, than any other branch of fiction today."

One of the first to seize the opportunity here was the firm Sidgwick and Jackson, who were not slow to recognise the connection between the quickening prospect of space-travel and the growing awareness of sf. Having tested the ground they put out three novels by Arthur C. Clarke, then chairman of the British Interplanetary Society, who had already launched himself on a rocketing career as a writer.

First came "The Sands of Mars", followed by "Islands in the Sky" and "Prelude to Space." These caught the public fancy enough for the firm to push their luck with Robert A. Heinlein's "Man Who Sold the Moon" and Alfred Bester's "Demolished Man," both of which had done pretty well in the U.S.A.

And, in 1953, the directors of Sidgwick and Jackson, headed by the enterprising James Knapp-Fisher, had the cute idea of launching the Science Fiction Book Club to put

out six selections a year. As it postulated in its first leaflet: "The literature of sf grows and grows . . . and followers increase in number every day. Such a body of readers . . . not only makes its own book club reasonable — it demands one."

Besides offering recent books at little more than half the original price, the club promised to resurrect rare "classics," first of which was Olaf Stapledon's masterly "Last and First Men," published 23 years before. Earlier, as the initial offering, came George R. Stewart's "Earth Abides," winner of the first International Fantasy Award, instituted by organised fandom.

In between came Ray Bradbury's "Martian Chronicles." And with each book came a news-sheet detailing coming choices, retailing members' views, and explaining to the uninitiated the derivations of sf — with due acknowledgments to Hugo Gernsback.

The club had not been going long before it had members as far apart as the Bronx, New York, and Madong, New Guinea. By 1954 it was featuring in its list Isaac Asimov, A. E. van Vogt, and sensational newcomer Kurt Vonnegut, whose work was getting an earlier airing by such firms as Gollancz, Michael Joseph and Macmillan. So many firms were getting into the act that *The Bookseller* reported: "The trade is now trying to catch up with the customers."

Then, suddenly, the bottom fell out of the market. Penguin Books said that sf had "somehow never caught on" with their readers. John Carnell blamed the bad impression made on the public mind by a spate of horror films. But the fact was that not enough good material was forthcoming to keep the boom booming. Asking "What Became of SF?" in 1960, critic Joyce Emerson

\* Now republished by Sidgwick & Jackson in "An Arthur C. Clarke Second Omnibus" (30s.), comprising three of his best novels; and in a new paperback edition by Sphere.

told **Sunday Times** readers the Book Club's members had been "steadily maintained at over 4,000," though its sponsors "never seem to be able to find more than six books a year above the moronic level."

The setback was only temporary, however. By the time that sf had started to pick up again, the club had been taken over by Phoenix House, who ran it in conjunction with Readers Union and the Country Book Club.

And by 1962 the club had an impressive list including such American top-liners as Theodore Sturgeon, Henry Kuttner, James Blish, Frederick Pohl, C.M. Kornbluth, Hal Clement, Poul Anderson and Clifford Simak. At the same time, British names were well to the fore. Old-timers Wyndham, Eric Frank Russell and Clarke were reinforced by John Christopher, E.C. Tubb, J. T. McIntosh and prolific Brian Aldiss. TV astronomer Patrick Moore and scientists Sir George Thomson and W. Grey Walter added weight to the line-up as the number of titles mounted to a dozen a year.

Today the price of the club's

selections has risen, under the burden of soaring costs, to 8s. 6d. or more. But its volumes are more presentable, each with its own jacket instead of a standard dust-cover, and are as good a bargain as ever. With a total output exceeding 150 titles, its list now reads like a "Who's Who" of sf writers, still more of whom are British — Charles Eric Maine, J. G. Ballard, John Brunner, L. P. Davies, Colin Wilson.

And many more intriguing titles are in store, according to Roy Precious, the club's promotion manager, who pays tribute to John Carnell for his years of conscientious work on the selection panel, on which he has sat from the beginning. "Our aim," he said, "is to present to as large a public as possible what we consider among the best of current sf. And the best sf is creative, visionary, dynamic — a vital literature. Its writers are giving our era its most distinctive voice."

Whatever it's saying, at least that voice can now heard on both sides of the Atlantic, and in far corners of the world, by thousands to whom the message never got through before.

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## Book Reviews

# THE BECKONING STARS

By WALTER GILLINGS



**THE PROMISE OF SPACE**, by Arthur C. Clarke. Hodder and Stoughton, London. 70s.

COMPARING his first modest little book on "Interplanetary Flight," written when he was assistant secretary of the British Interplanetary Society, with this handsome tome of 325pp. makes you realise the strides which astronautics — and its constant champion, Mr. Clarke — has made in twenty years.

Next to the magnificent, mysterious 2001, from which he must have got more fun in the production, this is probably his greatest achievement. I doubt if he can achieve much more between hard covers than this sweeping assessment of the possibilities presented by our mastery of space-travel, which is as fascinating as any book of sf, even written by himself.

The astute, inventive mind which he nurtured in his schooldays by building crude telescopes of Mecano parts, and the poetic imagination he has developed out of scribbling bits of verse — and much reading of sf — have been at their aphelion here. After a lucid treatment of the basic principles and history of his subject, he takes off into the furthest realms of what to him are the inevitable developments of the next century as though they were fore-ordained. Indeed, if we take a hint from his film, they may be . . .

He sees the new techniques of planetary exploration extending so far, in this time, that we may even settle on blistering Mercury or tame the icy wastes of Pluto, besides making Venus habitable. So, in due course, man's restless curiosity and limitless ingenuity will enable him to reach the stars, even if the journey from Jupiter to Proxima Centauri may take a million years.

Most books on astronautics which go so far usually hint at such remote contingencies on the last page. But

Mr. Clarke devotes a whole chapter to interstellar flight before coming back to earth to permit us to draw breath.

The book is written in such light-hearted yet convincing style that at times the author may seem to be pulling our legs as well as his own. But that is due only to his natural sense of humour, evident in so much of his work. He is, I know, in deadly earnest, and ends on a serious note which sounds a warning as well as a promise.

I only wish I could be here to see which way the spacewind blows.

## SOVIET SECRETS

**SOVIET SPACE EXPLORATION: The First Decade**, by William Shelton, Arthur Barker, London. 45s.

Reviewed by **Thomas Sheridan**

HOW MANY Russian cosmonauts have been lost in space? How many failed experiments have we not heard about? Are the Russians really not bothered about racing the Americans to the Moon? Are they solely concerned with the military advantages of getting into space? And after spending the equivalent of \$20 billion in the effort since Sputnik 1 hit the headlines, wouldn't they rather call the whole thing off?

This book, by a leading American journalist who has gathered his material on the spot, helped by the Russians themselves, draws aside the veil of secrecy which has always surrounded the Soviet space programme — or so we have been led to believe. A straight-faced introduction by Cosmonaut Gherman Titov gives a hint that they would be happier if they could get together with the Americans in the greatest effort ever made to advance the progress of the human race.

While two nations who are poles apart politically persist in competing in this, it is not surprising that

there should be a few rumours, if not deliberate canards, flying about. Mr. Shelton, no stranger to his subject, throws a penetrating light on this rivalry in a new dimension. As well as telling us more about the men — and the woman, Valentina — who have risked and even lost their lives in the cause of space conquest, he makes the men behind them seem less sinister.

"The book, of course, contains debatable points," says Titov, flatly. Which makes it all the more interesting, and required reading for all who are watching the most significant drama in history unfold itself.

## SPACE PIN-UPS

**THE MOON and THE CONQUEST OF SPACE.** Hallwag, Berne; George Philip, London, 17s.6d. each.

HERE'S something irresistible to astronautics enthusiasts of all ages. They are beautifully executed coloured charts with gorgeous silvery covers that open out into 44 in. by 33 in. sheets, printed both sides.

The lunar disc, 26in. across, shows all the seas and craters in detail. On the back is an index to the formations, some general information, and two more maps — one of the moon's other side based on photos taken by the Orbiter rockets and Luna 3; the other showing the landing places chosen for the Apollo mission as well as those already made by U.S. and Russian unmanned vehicles.

There are also several close-ups of craters taken by Ranger 9 four years ago and beamed back to Earth. All the data is in four languages.

The Conquest of Space map is even more impressive. It shows in almost confusing detail the orbits of the principal space vehicles despatched by both Russia and U.S.A., either about the Earth or to Venus and Mars, from Sputnik 1 to Zond 5 — almost 200 in all. On the back is all the relevant data, with nearly 100 photos and diagrams of the hardware, plus full details of the Apollo lunar landing mission.

This is a marvellous piece of work by the famous Swiss map-makers. The only problem that arises is which side of either map to pin to the wall of your den; for it would

be a shocking waste to keep them folded up in a drawer. Even at the sacrifice of your other pin-ups, you should display them. They'll make your den look like the chartroom of a lunar space-liner, and you can play for hours. **T. S.**

## EASY PICKINGS

**WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION** edited by Donald A. Wollheim and Terry Carr. Victor Gollancz, London, 30s.

Reviewed by **Geoffrey Giles**

AN OLD hand at the game in America, Mr. Wollheim should know how to pick them. In putting this capacious volume together, he has been helped by another aficionado who has been around long enough to know good sf when he sees it. In any case, they both admit, their task was not difficult: "... the year (1967) was a very good year indeed."

It is the first time that this annual collection has been reprinted in this country, though it has been assembled in America since 1965. I trust it won't be the last. Because, taking it as a whole, it is as fine a selection of sf as one can expect these days; indeed, rather better.

This is perhaps because these sixteen stories are cast in a mould combining good storytelling with that sense of wonder which the editors consider more important than any "New Wave" or revolutionary trend of a kind which usually robs sf of what is for me, too, its essential element.

The collection has derived from seven different magazines, including Britain's **SF Impulse** and **New Worlds**. Among those present, inevitably, are Isaac Asimov and Brian Aldiss.

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# PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS



**MASTERS' CHOICE 1 and 2**, edited by Laurence M. Janifer. Universal-Tandem, London. 3s. 6d. Horwitz, Sydney. 70c.

Reviewed by **Geoffrey Giles**

THE publishers have shown good sense in presenting the softcover version of this anthology (published here earlier by Herbert Jenkins) in two volumes, so that the poorest of us may buy it on easy terms. The editor, too, had a good idea in the way he compiled it — or tried to, for I think the results hardly justified the efforts which he and his Masters exerted.

The claim that the book comprises "the best sf stories of all time" is rather extravagant, especially since Mr. Janifer admits to trying to pick on "less familiar works"; for if they were among the best they would surely be better-known. True, the names of Bradbury, Asimov, Heinlein, Kuttner and Moore are a fair guarantee of quality, and some of the tales have made a lasting impression.

But Mr. Janifer had to be influenced in his final selection by considerations of length: every anthologist has to put on a fair show. In justification he argues that for years it was the short story form which sustained sf, conveniently forgetting that most of the finest tales of the "Golden Age" were serialised. And the best of these have long since been resurrected.

The fact remains that of the eighteen necessarily shorter pieces in these two volumes, at least half derived from the fifties — hardly the most creative period in the thirty years spanned by the whole, I should have thought.

The novel feature about this collection is that it purports to represent the most brilliant of a hundred gems picked out by twenty leading writers and editors — only half a dozen of whom are included here, which also seems slightly inconsis-

ent, unless the rest were too modest. Or, more likely, they had forgotten those truly Golden Days which other anthologists have not entirely neglected.

Ah, well, we must keep up with the times. But when did "all time" start, I wonder?

## POETS IN SPACE

**FRONTIER OF GOING: An Anthology of Space Poetry** selected by John Fairfax. Panther Books, London. 5s.

Reviewed by **Thomas Sheridan**

EXCEPTING myself practically everybody who has anything to do with sf writing has a tendency to try his hand at poetry, and some have a genuine talent for it.

I can think of Stanton A. Coblenz, author of "The Sunken World," who for many years ran the noted American poetry magazine, **Wings**. Then there is — or was — Lilith Lorraine, one of the first women to write sf for Hugo Gernsback. She, too, ran a magazine called **Different**, and devoted at least one issue to the theme of "The Conquest of Space," when 32 contributors got their lines in print.

There was a time when the pulp magazines filled holes at the foot of pages with poems by versifiers one of whom called himself "The Planet Prince." One of his odes I recall was addressed to his "Little Martian Sweetheart" . . .

Today, "Love in a Spacesuit" is more to everybody's taste, though the joke about love in free fall has been going the rounds (in prose) for years. James Kirkup, however, is in some difficulty:

Dear, when on some distant planet  
We, love's protestants, alight,  
How, in our deep-space-diver suits  
Shall our devoted limbs unite . . . ?

The only solution he can see is a spacesuit built for two. In this



highly technological field, I feel there must be an easier way. It might get a little too hot in there.

Without a twinge of guilt I will admit that only a few names in this anthology — a happy inspiration that will almost certainly be duplicated — mean much to me.

Perhaps I would respond to more of the 49 pieces here assembled if they were set to music — which, in the pop idiom, has lately caught on to the idea of space-travel. But, even though they are all on the same theme, I can appreciate their diversity. Not all poets are starry-eyed.

I couldn't help but notice that not one of two dozen contributors is a woman. Could there be any significance in that? Or has Mr. Kirkup scared them off?

## MANUAL OF MAGIC

**THE BLACK ARTS**, by Richard Cavendish. Pan Books, London. 6s.

Reviewed by **Herbert Hughes**

NEARLY every time I look in on Late Night Line-Up these days I seem to find an animated group discussing

witchcraft, if not actually indulging in their more harmless antics.

The author of this book, who is also editor of the weekly-part encyclopedia **Man, Myth and Magic**, could hardly get a word in edgeways when he appeared on the same programme with two well-meaning ladies who took pride in their paganism and were anxious to underline their good works.

But he has said all there is to say about black magic in this book, covering all aspects of the intriguing subject, from astrology to worship of the Devil. Including an extensive bibliography and a full index, there are 414 pages of fascinating reading which, if properly taken in, should qualify anybody for an activity which is growing in popularity.

Even if you don't take it seriously, it will give you a chance to talk knowledgeably next time you meet a witch. If you can only get her to stop spelling it out herself for as long as it takes to mount a broomstick . . .

Apart from which, it makes a marvellous reference book for writers of weird and horror tales — which, as you may have noticed, are gaining more and more adherents.

## THE MULTI-MAN

by  
**Philip Harbottle**

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An in-depth portrait of one of science fiction's most colourful contributors. The result of nine years' research, it sheds new light on Fearn's extraordinary writing career, beginning with the pre-war American sf magazines. It is also a history of much of the early development of sf in both Britain and America.

Included are observations and letters by Fearn on many subjects, with sidelights by Ken Bulmer, John Carnell, and William F. Temple. There are detailed evaluations of Fearn's novels and stories, and an exhaustive bibliography covering his entire prolific output, which embraces the cinema, westerns and mystery thrillers as well as science fiction.

Litho printed, heavy pictorial covers, illustrated. 15/- per copy (U.S., \$2.50) post free. Available from the author at: 27 Cheshire Gardens, Wallsend-on-Tyne, Northumberland, England.



## Cosmic Comeback

TO THE thousands of today's sf and horror story fans the name of Walter Gillings means nothing. Yet there can be few better qualified to edit **COSMOS**, drawing on specialist knowledge which extends over 40 years.

A keen student of sf since 1927, he was one of the moving spirits of Britain's "fandom" in the early thirties, and joined with such enthusiasts as Arthur C. Clarke and John Carnell in forming the first Science Fiction Association, of which the late Prof. A. M. Low was president. He was also an early member of the British Interplanetary Society, and served on its Council when it was re-formed after the war.

As a professional journalist, Gillings was the first to enlist the aid of the few British writers — J. M. Walsh, John Russell Fearn, John Beynon (now John Wyndham), Festus Pragnell and Benson Herbert — who in the thirties were contributing to the American magazines, in an attempt to interest British publishers in the medium. To reflect this activity he launched the first printed "fanmag," adopting as its title the appellation coined by America's sf publisher, Hugo Gernsback — **Scientifiction**.

The result was Britain's first shilling sf magazine, **Tales of Wonder**, in which he encouraged several new writers, while relying on leading American exponents for much of its contents. After 17 quarterly issues, **ToW** was killed by paper shortage — the last issue was edited in a NAAFI canteen at Tidworth.

After the war Gillings produced **Strange Tales** and **Fantasy**, neither of

which could combat current conditions. So, to co-ordinate American and British developments, he launched **Science-Fantasy Review**, hailed as the most mature and authoritative journal ever devoted to the medium.

It ran for three years, doubling its size to 40 pages before it was incorporated in **Science-Fantasy**, which Gillings initiated for Nova Publications, the fan-financed company he conceived jointly with John Carnell, who had already launched **New Worlds**.

In 1950 Gillings was forced to suspend his activities in the field which was just starting to develop here. Since then he has edited **Amateur Tape Recording** and **Public Service**, produced taped news bulletins for the blind, and taught newspaper and periodical journalism. His return to the vastly changed sf scene is due to a comparatively early retirement, at 57, from the strenuous round of workaday journalism.

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